

## duty station: **IRAQ**



Photo by JO3 J. Hastings McIver

An empty fuel bladder, or "bag," shimmers in the midday sun. The bag has a 50,000-gallon capacity and is surrounded by 5-foot walls, which will contain the fuel if the bag is ruptured.

# fuel farm

## Keeping the Troops Moving



Photo by JO3 J. Hastings McIver

EO2 Jamie Ruman "dresses up the wall" surrounding a fuel "bag." The walls, or "berms," surrounding the 50,000-gallon bags are built up to a height of about five feet. If the bag ruptures, the wall will contain 110 percent of the bag's contents, allowing for any "wave action" that may accompany the rupture.

### JO3 J. Hastings McIver

Commander, Naval Reserve Force Public Affairs

**C**AMP ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq - Without fuel, convoys could not travel. Convoys are the life's blood of the effort in the Middle East - the means by which personnel enter the battlefield and return from it.

The 528th U.S. Navy Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants Supply Company (528th USN POL) at Camp Anaconda is making sure convoys move.

Eighty Reservists from the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force (NAVELSF) make up the 528th USN POL, and they tend the 50,000-gallon fuel bladders at what has been dubbed the "Bag Farm." It's their job to ensure the bags are properly maintained, the fuel berms (dirt walls surrounding the bags) are solid, and the up-to-100 vehicles needing fuel daily are filled.

They also repair and replace bags and berms when the fuel farm takes mortar or rocket fire.

"We do anything and everything necessary to keep the flow of fuel going to the Coalition Forces," said STG1 John Waters.

Waters and the 528th have been in Iraq since February, and he

said his family, friends and coworkers in the States have been incredibly supportive. He added that the members of his team have made working in such a stressful environment a little easier.

ABF1 Gerard Moore is the project foreman at the fuel farm. He, too, said camaraderie takes the edge off the unfortunate reality of living and working in a war zone. According to Moore, there are some positive aspects involved with the work he and the 528th are doing.

"It's an adventure," said Moore, "getting to see and know a different culture. We see the good that we're doing here, other than what the news media reports. These people now have water and electricity."

Of course, home is a long way away, and there's always some homesickness involved with any deployment.

"It's the small things that you miss," Moore said. "The things you normally take for granted are the things you miss the most."

No matter what the odds, or how dangerous the conditions might be, the 528th is pumping vitality into the vehicles that make the liberation of Iraq possible. They play an integral role in the grand scheme, and have stepped up to that role with strength and determination. They are a prime example of this nation's proud Navy Reserve. ♦

# skunk werks

## Sailors' Ingenuity Protects Our Troops

**JO3 J. Hastings McIver**

*Commander, Naval Reserve Force Public Affairs*

**C**AMP ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – In the seething heat of the Iraqi desert, convoys traverse the shimmering sands to accomplish a range of missions.

Whether it's bringing necessary supplies to troops in the field or moving personnel from one hot spot to another, enemy fire is a constant reality, and protecting the lives of service members is often a matter of sheer ingenuity.

Enter the metal smiths of Camp Anaconda's "Skunk Werks," an armory born more of necessity than of tactical planning. With the large number of troops needed in the field, these highly resourceful service members at Anaconda have devised a system of up-arming five-tons, Light-Medium Tactical Vehicles, and High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs, or "Humvees"), thereby rendering them veritable fortresses on wheels.

Hull Technician 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Michael Summers, a member of the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force, is one of two Navy Reservists assigned to the Skunk Werks. Summers, who has gained welding experience as an HT, has put his knowledge to work in the least likely of places: Deep in the desert, at Camp Anaconda, Balad, just 50 miles northwest of Baghdad. In the open-air building that serves as their welding shop, these Sailors are working closely with Soldiers, Airmen and Iraqi nationals, building gun boxes and reinforcing vehicles, all in the interest of saving lives.

To produce armor tough enough to withstand Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), small arms fire, and landmines, the Skunk Werks uses quarter-inch steel plates, as well as a Swedish-made material called Armox, which is a high-carbon armor plate that is both lightweight and extremely difficult to penetrate. The Armox has already proven its worth on numerous occasions, especially when brought face-to-face with the blast produced by IEDs and landmines, some of the most insidious of the terrorists' weapons.

Summers described one such instance as he held a picture of a nearly destroyed Humvee in the Iraqi desert. Also in the photo were two medics, tending to a wounded Soldier. "This is one of the boxes that we did; it's a four-door Humvee with a small box," said Summers. "It hit a landmine. The crew compartment was OK because we put steel plating underneath and in the front. It blew the rear tire off and the gun box went twenty feet in the air. It pretty much totaled the Humvee, and the Sailor broke his ankle, but everybody survived.

"This was the fourth confirmed save we've had until yesterday, when that guy came in and shook my hand."

"That guy" was the Skunk Werks' fifth confirmed save. He stopped by the Skunk Werks with a small souvenir: a mashed and flattened Iraqi bullet. He wanted to thank the team for their ingenuity. "He showed me where the bullet penetrated the Armox. The angle iron we put in stopped the bullet," said Summers. "He had it in his wallet. It would have entered right about at his appendix, and it would have done some serious damage. He just wanted to shake my hand and see if we could do any other work for any of his other guys."

This is just one example of Navy Reservists doing their part to aid the effort in the Middle East, and emerging as heroes in the face of all adversity. Even in such foreboding conditions, the skills these men and women have gained through their experiences as Reservists have proved invaluable tools in the Global War on Terrorism. ♦

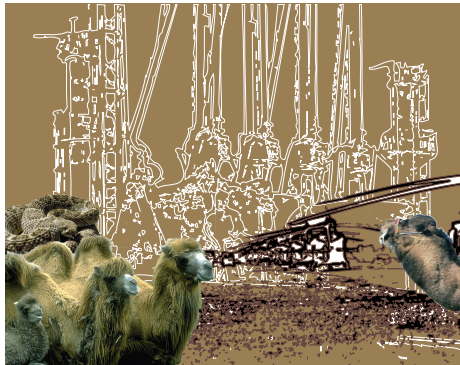


Photo by JO3 J.Hastings McIver

HT2 Summers, a member of Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force, welds the seam connecting the base of a gun box to its walls at Camp Anaconda's Skunk Werks. Welding while in the confines of a gun box can be dangerous in the raging heat of the Iraqi desert, as the compounded heat of the sun and the torch can send temperatures rocketing up to 180 degrees.



## duty station: **ī r a q**



# **mach team 1**

## Bridging the "Last Mile"



Photo by JO3 J.Hastings McIver

**JO3 J. Hastings McIver**  
Commander, Naval Reserve Force  
Public Affairs

**KUWAIT CITY  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT, Kuwait**  
- It's the last leg of the journey that matters most. That holds especially true when the journey ends with service members on the front lines of the Global War on Terrorism receiving essential supplies.

That's where the members of Mobile Air Cargo Handling Team 1 (MACH Team 1) have proven themselves

and then moved along by whomever happened to be working the airstrip. It was this process, or lack thereof, that left \$30 million worth of equipment missing after Operation Desert Storm. Though the missing equipment was, for the most part, eventually recovered, it was clear that something needed to be done.

"We saw a critical gap in supply chain management," said Coleman. "That gap has been filled by Naval Reservists."

Because of the efforts of those Reservists, the time it takes to move fundamental cargo through the "Last Mile" has gone from 12 days down to six. That's quite an improvement, to say the least.

SK2 John E. Larson is a member of MACH Team 1. He said that working with service members from other branches of the military can be difficult, but the end goal is the same, regardless. "Every branch has its own customs, but we're getting used to how each of them does things," said Larson. "We take all the cargo, and we send it all up."

At 33, Larson is already a father of four. He said that communication with his wife and children is limited, but available. Of course, he's not the only member of the team with family back home. MACH Team 1's membership also includes four single mothers and seven grandmothers, all of them very capable Sailors.

SK2 John E. Larson (top), Navy Reservist and member of Mobile Air Cargo Handling (MACH) Team ONE, works with Marine Corps Cpl. Hampton McMillian of the 4th Land Supply Battalion, Charlie Company, in the 100-degree-plus evening heat to prepare crates of ice cream for shipment to the 3rd Marine Air Wing in Al Asad, Iraq. MACH Team ONE is comprised of about 25 Navy Reservists from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion 11 out of Omaha, Ne., and is tasked with aiding the Marine Corps in the transportation of supplies through the last leg of the journey, also known as the "Last Mile," from the U.S. to service members in Iraq.

indispensable. They spend their days on the runways of Kuwait City International Airport (KCIA) ensuring that cargo destined for troops in Iraq finds its way to its proper destination. This final distance, from touchdown in Kuwait to delivery in Iraq, has been dubbed the "Last Mile." It was, at one point, considered notoriously difficult to negotiate. That changed with the advent of the MACH Team.

MACH Team 1 is comprised of 21 Reservists from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion 14 Air Cargo Company, based in Omaha, Neb., which is a division of the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force (NAVELSF). They work in conjunction with a variety of other service members to, as they put it, "push parts and track shipments." Those shipments include such vital supplies as food, ammunition and aircraft parts.

According to Marine Corps Col. Richard Coleman, the work done by MACH Team 1 was, until recently, not assigned to any particular group. That meant that crates of cargo were being delivered to KCIA

"The best we can do for the troops right now is support them in any way we can," said SK2 Lisa Matson, expressing her pride in the team and the job they're doing. She is the single mother of two, the second youngest member of the MACH Team, and a crucial link in the war-fighting chain.

MACH Team 1 is out in the desert sun day after day, working on tarmac that can register temperatures upwards of 140 degrees in the summer. They make sure the troops have what they need, no matter what the conditions. They've even had mortar rounds land 20 yards from where they were working, and still they press on.

Coleman said the MACH Team project has come together brilliantly, with Navy Reservists serving as its backbone. "We saw a need, we submitted the request, and now I just can't say enough good things about NAVELSF," said Coleman. "None of this would have been possible without them." ♦

## redcom round-up



AT3 Cassie Gibson guides a AN/AQS-14 mine detection submersible unit back onto its cradle on the ramp of an MH-53 Sea Dragon assigned to the "Black-hawks" of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron One Five (HM-15), a Navy Reserve squadron from Corpus Christi, Texas, during mine hunting missions as part a bilateral exercise with a country in the 5th Fleet theater. The exercise tested a number of warfare areas, include mine counter measures, anti-air, surface and submarine, electronic and explosive ordinance disposal.

Photo by PH1 Bart A. Bauer



### REDCOM Southeast

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – RADM Kenneth C. Belisle recently retired ending a 37-year Naval career. Belisle most recently served as Commander, Navy Reserve Readiness Command Southeast. A 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Belisle is a commercial pilot in his civilian capacity.

- JO2 Jennifer Valdivia, REDCOM Southeast Public Affairs



### REDCOM Southwest

SAN DIEGO – USS McClusky (FFG 41), a Navy Reserve Force ship, recently returned to homeport following a six-month deployment. McClusky supported the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force in the eastern Pacific, which included counter-drug operations in the Caribbean, and Central and South America. McClusky conducted five successful drug seizures, preventing the trafficking of almost eight tons of narcotics by sea.

-Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

POINT MUGU, Calif. – AW1(AW/NAC) Robert Ziegler from Patrol Squadron 65 (VP-65) recently competed with the Navy's Southwest Regional team in the Armed Forces Triathlon. Ziegler, who is a Full Time Support Reservist, finds time to compete in triathlons as often as he can. Since his first race in 1986, he has participated in dozens of triathlons all over California.

- JO2 Auburn Hutton, NAR Point Mugu Public Affairs



### REDCOM Mid-West

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. – Reservists at Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center (NMCRC) Battle Creek recently honored 89-year-old Mary Jo McMorrow for her service in World War II. McMorrow served in the WAVES in World War II and

later with the Secret Service as a communications and intelligence petty officer during the Korean War. She has been an outspoken advocate and role model for women in the military. NMCRC Battle Creek provided a formal ceremony to present McMorrow with her World War II Victory medal and her National Defense medal.

- LCDR T.R. Shaw, NMCRC Battle Creek Public Affairs Officer

DETROIT – The Navy Reserve and active duty are joining forces in a new recruiting advertising campaign. The Detroit-based advertising firm of Campbell-Ewald is taking the lead in advertising for the right individuals ready to accept the challenge of serving in the Navy and the Navy Reserve. Recently the advertising firm surveyed Reservists at Naval Reserve Center Detroit to gain an understanding about what Reservists want to get out about their service in an advertising campaign. The latest advertising weapons in the arsenal will unleash a retooled television campaign with four commercials, five radio ads and numerous print ads.

- JO2 Barrie Barber, Naval Reserve Center Detroit



### REDCOM South

FORT WORTH, Texas – NAS JRB Fort Worth honored Korean War veterans recently in a symposium sponsored by Commander Seventh Fleet Detachment 111 (C7F 111). Six Korean War veterans shared their experiences

with Reservists serving as an inspiration to those who carry on the tradition of American service on the Korean peninsula. The honored Korean War veterans reminded Seventh Fleet Reservists that the compassion and goodwill of American servicemen has won over the Korean people.

-ENS Kasey S. Pipes and ENS Michael Street, NIB 111